

October 7, 2024

To: Matthew Kowalski, Ann Arbor Planning Commission
Ann Arbor Planning Commission Members

CC: Tim Loughrin, Robertson Homes

From: Tim Carroll, Country Place Condominium Association

RE: Scio Church Development Proposal SP24-0007 (Revised and Resubmitted)

1. Robertson's Request for R4E Zoning

The Unified Development Code provision governing R4E zoning specifically states that R4E is intended for parcels "along signature transit corridors as identified in the City's Master Plan"

When we were first advised of the Robertson proposal and site plan, we assumed that the land was in or near a transit corridor, because that is what we were told. Later, we were again told we were in a transit corridor. That is what Robertson stated in paragraph 6 of its zoning application. (An unfortunate and misleading choice of words.) However, we now know this parcel is NOT in or near a transit corridor.

Then, in response to our March 25 memo, we were told that all twelve of the 3-story buildings in the plan were needed to satisfy the City's insistence on high density. That makes no sense for a parcel with R2 and single family R1 zoned property to the east, west and south, and Pioneer High on the north. It seems that Robertson needs the R4E designation primarily to justify 75 homes on about 5 acres and, more likely, to allow construction of Robertson's traditional 35 or 40-foot-tall townhomes.

Robertson's position that these 3 story buildings with 75 homes, requiring R4E zoning, are consistent with the Master Plan, is simply not supported by the facts. When the Master Plan was adopted, which envisions attached single family homes for this area, the only nearby attached single family homes were on Audubon Drive to the west, zoned R2. Subsequently, the area immediately to the east was zoned attached single family – again R2.

2. The unambiguous language of the Unified Development Code requires Robertson to minimize the impact of its proposed R4E site plan upon adjacent property.

Robertson has done little or nothing to satisfy this requirement. For its Waters Road development, Robertson agreed to greater set back requirements, 2 story buildings

along the property line with its neighbors and the elimination of the rooftop deck option. (Please see our Memo of May 6, 2024.) All we have seen by way of minimizing impact is a nice fence along the border (and only the northern third) and a slight increase in the setback requirement for some buildings.

We ask everyone involved in this matter to visit Townes on the Green, Robertson's Waters Road project, to get a firsthand look at these enormous buildings. As proposed, this development would look like just another crowded apartment complex, with as many units as possible jammed onto available space.

3. Other Concerns

Rental Restrictions. Robertson's zoning application suggests that this project will attract professionals, empty nesters and students. These are to be 3-bedroom townhomes. Why would an empty nester want 3 bedrooms on three floors without an elevator? We can see why students would like 3 bedrooms and a rooftop deck. Six or more students may be able to afford the rent on a condo, even one that costs more than a half million dollars.

We have been provided with the HOA bylaws applicable to Waters Road, which seem quite reasonable and would require any rental to be for the entire unit and only for single family living. Mr. Loughrin has advised that the same restrictions would be contained in the Scio Church by-laws, so maybe rental activity is no longer an issue.

Access to Audubon Drive. An early memo from a Planning Commission staff member suggests that a connection to Audubon should be included in the site plan. Audubon Drive is a private road, built, maintained and paid for by Audubon Drive owners. Although we have been assured by Mr. Loughrin that access to Audubon is unnecessary and probably not even feasible, please understand that Audubon owners will not agree to any such connection.

We again ask the Planning Commission to recognize and respect the legitimate concerns and reasonable expectations of Audubon Drive and other nearby homeowners, who have been paying Ann Arbor taxes for many years. In the absence of substantial modifications, we urge you to recommend rejection of the Robertson proposal.